

Transportation Funding Task Force (TF2)
Zehnders of Frankenmuth
August 11, 2008

Final Meeting Minutes

Meeting began at: 9:06 a.m.

Members Present: Sen. Glenn Anderson, Rep. Pam Byrnes, Sen. Jud Gilbert, Cindy Elliot, Dennis Gillow, Rep. Phil LaJoy, John James, Ann Jousma-Miller, Mike Nystrom, Roger Salo, Peter Varga, Susan Zehnder, and Rich Studley.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Studley and the task force members introduced themselves for the benefit of the audience. The meeting minutes from the July 21, 2008 meeting and August 11, 2008 agenda were approved unanimously. Public comment was offered in the morning, noon, and afternoon sessions.

Public Comment

Jeff Nagel (Midland, Bay City, Saginaw Airport Manager), spoke about the economic impact of the MBS International Airport, the critical need for airport funding, and the importance of moving aviation funding from the Capital Outlay budget to the MDOT operating budget.

Kathy McGeathy (Disability Network – Flint), urged the task force to keep people with disabilities in mind as they make recommendations. Ms. McGeathy pointed out the work of the Complete Streets Projects and to keep this concept in mind to ensure system accessibility for everyone.

Robert Webster (Disability Network), stated that the task force needs to consider folks with disabilities and the respective economic impact. Mentioned the problems associated with college graduates leaving the state and benefits of tourism that could counter the economic downturn in the automotive sector. Expressed concern about the availability of transportation in Michigan, and why people would come here (especially the disabled)?

Steve Puuri (Washtenaw County Road Commissioner) discussed public expectations and the respective financial realities. Stated that there are no more rabbits left to pull out of our hat, causing lay offs and the inability to hire any new talent. In addition, we have the technology to support system improvements, but no money for the technology. Reminded the task force that about 2/3rds of the system is not supported by federal aid and there is insufficient revenue to invest in this part of the transportation system. Opined that the implementation of local revenue options would be a hard sell in Washtenaw County due to the number of other local road agencies that would have to be involved.

Presentations

Robert Chaprnka (Michigan Rail Road Association President) – Provided a slide presentation to the task force on various Michigan rail road statistics, demographics, investment needs, economic benefits, and proposed several legislative/programmatic changes that would be helpful to the rail industry.

Connie Morrison (MDOT) – Provided a brief overview to the task force on the Citizens Advisory Committee revenue/needs assessment recommendation for each mode. In addition, information was provided on each mode that highlighted federal aid leveraged, jobs created and return on investment outcomes.

Chris Hundt (MDOT) – Discussed President Bush’s recent USDOT reform plan with the task force. Mr. Hundt highlighted the impetus of the reform plan, proposed solutions, and the potential impact this plan may have on Michigan.

Tim Hoeffner (MDOT) - Updated the task force on the Director Steudle’s recent report to the Transportation Commission on potential future state and federal funding shortfalls and the potential system investment strategies changes that might be required.

Jake Falk (USDOT) – Provided a slide presentation to the task force on public private partnerships.

Patrick DeCorla-Souza (USDOT) – Provided a slide presentation to the task force on congestion pricing.

Task Force Discussion and Conclusions

Initially, each task force member was given an opportunity to discuss the Citizen Advisory Committee’s needs assessment recommendations that were submitted at the July meeting. Several task force members requested additional information from the Citizens Advisory Committee and MDOT before they could effectively identify investment and revenue options to consider.

During the work session, the task force unanimously agreed that that “Do-Nothing” investment scenario was unacceptable. The task force also agreed that the “Good” investment scenario is a good place to begin for short-term recommendations, but that “Better” should not be abandoned. The group discussed how the “Better” investment scenario achieves a level of transportation service that is worth striving for and could possibly be achieved over a longer time frame.

The agenda for September 8, 2008 will include discussion of aviation needs and revenues, local funding options, and other revenue options grouped by type as time allows. The meeting location has been changed to the Lansing Community College West Campus facility.

Follow up:

Citizens Advisory Committee Action Requested

- 1) The methodology that was used to develop the needs estimates
- 2) Information on reforms, efficiencies, and best practices

Michigan Department of Transportation Action Requested

- 1) Alternative funding options matrix
- 2) Information on economic development funding (i.e. casino compact revenue & tobacco settlement revenue).

The meeting ended at 4:15 p.m.